



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.2420 | FAX (517) 373.2764

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/garcia/

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Contact: Maleigh Jackson
517-373-2420

Sen. Garcia co-sponsors legislation to crack down on repeat drunk drivers

LANSING—Convicted drunk drivers who repeatedly get behind the wheel while intoxicated could receive harsher punishment for their violations, according to legislation co-sponsored today by state Sen. Valde Garcia, R-Howell.

Under current law, a person may be charged with a felony for a third drunk-driving conviction if it occurs within 10 years of the first conviction. But if a third conviction occurs more than 10 years after the first, it is merely a misdemeanor punishable by up to 93 days in jail—the punishment accorded a first offense.

Senate Bill 1241 would amend the law, making any third or subsequent drunk-driving conviction a felony, regardless of the time passed between convictions.

“It is important that a drunk driver guilty of a third offense receives the penalties set in place for such an offender,” said Garcia. “The offender’s behavior, not time, should determine the punishment.”

Garcia’s legislation has the support of numerous state law-enforcement associations and Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

SB 1241 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

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